



Undergraduate Applicants from Hong Kong

These notes are intended for applicants from Hong Kong who are considering applying to the University of Cambridge in 2013 for 2014 entry (or deferred entry in 2015) as an undergraduate student. This information supplements that given in the University's *Undergraduate Prospectus*, published annually in March, and the *International Students Information Guide*. The Prospectus and other useful information is available on our website: www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/

If you would like a personal paper copy of the Prospectus, you should write to the Cambridge Admissions Office, Fitzwilliam House, 32 Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1QY, England. Please enclose a cheque for UK £9.50, drawn on a UK bank, or for US \$15 for the cost of airmail postage. You can also order and pay for a printed copy online at: www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/publications/prospectus/

If you have questions not answered by the Prospectus, website or by these notes, you can write to the Admissions Tutor of a College (addresses are in the Prospectus) or email: hongkong@cao.cam.ac.uk

Information on entry for *postgraduate* courses may be obtained from the Graduate Admissions Office (Telephone: +44 1223 760606; Email: Graduate.Admissions@admin.cam.ac.uk) or at: www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/gsprospectus/gsrequest.html

How to apply

An application to the University consists of both an online UCAS application and a Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA). The COPA replaces the previously used Cambridge Overseas Application Form (COAF). The COPA can be accessed at www.study.cam.ac.uk/undergraduate/apply/copa.html from **early July 2013**.

The online UCAS application form can be accessed at: www.ucas.com/students/apply/. It is very important that applicants take care to apply in the correct cycle, and so they should click "UCAS Apply 2014" for applications for 2014 entry or 2015 deferred entry to the University of Cambridge.

Deadlines

Both your completed COPA and UCAS application must be submitted by **15 October 2013**. This submission date is firmly restricted to those *who are domiciled, permanently resident or attending schools or other higher educational institutions within the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong*. All other overseas applicants, including Hong Kong residents attending schools outside the SAR *must apply by the earlier overseas application deadline of 20 September 2013*.

If you are a HK resident at school in the United Kingdom, the deadline for your application remains 15 October 2013, in line with all other pupils attending UK Schools. Like them, you may be called for interview in Cambridge before the end of the autumn school term.

If you are applying for a *Prince Philip Scholarship*, you should follow the scholarship application process set out on the Friends of Cambridge University in Hong Kong website (www.cambridge.org.hk/blog/blogs/scholarship.php) and apply for a place at Cambridge in the usual way.

Entrance requirements

We will consider applications from candidates who have studied or are studying towards the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Candidates will typically be asked to obtain at least grades 5*, 5*, 5 in three specified elective subjects related to their chosen course at the University of Cambridge. Applicants should normally expect to be set demanding conditions in the other compulsory subjects in the Diploma core, particularly in Mathematics and English.

Alternatively, we will consider applications from candidates who have studied or are studying towards either the International Baccalaureate (IB), A Levels or an equivalent qualification, or hold a Bachelors degree. Offers drawn from more than one examination (hybrid offers) will not normally be made.

English language requirements

If your first language is not English, please note that you will be required to achieve, *before* ultimate entry, a satisfactory standard in the IELTS *International English Language Test* taken through the British Council, normally achieving a minimum overall score of 7.5, usually with 7.0 or above in each element of that test.

Furthermore, a reasonable standard in spoken English is also required at the time of interview. Further information on spoken English language requirements for interview will be added to this publication as soon as possible.

Subject choice

For all subjects it is absolutely essential that applicants should read the *Undergraduate Prospectus* and be well acquainted with the structure and contents of the course for which they are applying. If an applicant indicates at interview that they are unfamiliar with the nature of the course, this will make a very poor impression. You can be considered for any course offered by the University as listed in the *Undergraduate Prospectus*. Some specific points to note are:

Architecture – this is not considered as a purely technical subject in Cambridge and applicants usually have to bring a substantial portfolio of artwork with them to be discussed at interview. In previous years very few overseas applicants for Architecture have been successful in gaining places: serious applicants are advised, if at all possible, to be prepared to travel to Cambridge for interview.

Economics – competition is currently very severe for places to read Economics and good ability at Mathematics is of equal importance to an interest in, and basic knowledge of, Economics.

Law – currently there is a lot of competition for places to read Law at Cambridge and *motivation* for the course plus a relish for the intellectual challenges involved in legal study and work are important in addition to strong examination grades.

Where possible, applicants should try to see the Law in action, by work experience or shadowing a lawyer, or by watching a few court cases. The written test for Law applicants will be a 2-hour version of the *Cambridge Law Test*, see: www.law.cam.ac.uk/admissions/cambridge-law-test.php

Medicine – because of Government restrictions there is currently a maximum admission of twenty-two places a year for overseas medical students in Cambridge as a whole. Anyone admitted as a preclinical medical student is assured of a clinical course place, subject only to satisfactory progress and health requirements. The full cost of an entire six-year medical course of training is rather high (totalling up to £286,000 at current rates*).

College choice

The University of Cambridge is made up of a number of Colleges. 29 of these admit undergraduate students. If you are an affiliated applicant (i.e. applying to study for a second Bachelors degree) you

must select a College to apply to; this choice should be indicated on both your UCAS application and your COPA. There is no answer to the common question: 'What is the best College choice for a student coming from Hong Kong or applying for a particular subject?' In general all Colleges accept applicants for all subjects (the few exceptions are detailed in the University's *Undergraduate Prospectus* and on our website). Before you choose a College to specify on your application you should consult the College entries in the *Undergraduate Prospectus* and on the University website. It is unwise to select a College solely because of the availability of a named scholarship award at that College. Please note that it is essential your choice of Cambridge College on your UCAS application and COPA match. If there is a discrepancy, your choice of College on your UCAS application will take precedence. It will not be possible, under any circumstances, to change your choice of Cambridge College once you have submitted your UCAS application and COPA. If you prefer you can submit an *Open Application* and you will be allocated to a College.

If a College is not able to offer a place to an applicant who is judged otherwise up to the normal standard required for Cambridge entry, the application will be passed on to be considered by other Colleges with vacancies in the relevant subject area.

Year of entry

Applicants applying this year (in 2013) may be seeking places on courses beginning in October 2014, or deferred entry places on courses beginning in October 2015, in which case they will be expected to discuss at the interview their plans for the period and their reasons for seeking deferred entry.

Finance

There are 109 students from Hong Kong currently studying in Cambridge of whom 55 are undergraduates. Around 20% of international students at Cambridge are funded on various Scholarship schemes; the remainder are supported by other sponsors, parents, and loans.

The *Cambridge Overseas Trust* (www.cambridgetrusts.org) has schemes of bursaries that may provide limited support for students who are able to meet the major part of their costs from other sources. It is appreciated that at the time of application those looking for scholarships are unlikely to be sure of their funding situation.

The estimated total annual cost of studying at Cambridge as an international undergraduate in 2014-15 will be in the range of £29,000* to £49,000* (depending on subject, and excluding travel and summer vacation living costs). Obviously the cost in future years is likely to increase at least in line with the rate of inflation, and the effect on the cost of any changes in currency exchange rates cannot easily be predicted.

Hong Kong residents at schools either within or outside the Special Administrative Region might consider applying for a *Prince Philip Scholarship*, tenable at all Colleges:

www.cambridge.org.hk/blog/blogs/scholarship.php

Jardine Scholarships (www.jardine-foundation.org/), tenable at four specified Colleges, are open to residents of many East Asian nations.

Interviews

Competition for places at Cambridge is very strong, especially in the most popular subjects, and interviews, whether held in Cambridge or locally, are an important part of our selection procedures. A team of Cambridge Tutors carry out interviews in Hong Kong **primarily for those resident and at school in Hong Kong**, in late November and early December. Those applicants resident, or attending schools in mainland China, including Shenzhen, may be interviewed in Shanghai in early November, under a separate scheme. **N.B. They must apply by the earlier application deadline of 20 September 2013.**

The interviews in Hong Kong will be 30 minutes in duration. They are not primarily concerned with money or financial arrangements, but are designed to assess the academic potential of applicants in their chosen subject area. Most interviewed applicants will also be asked to take a two-hour written

subject test on Wednesday 27 November 2013. The tests will require familiarity with the current syllabus for those who are still at school. Applicants who have already left school may also be asked to take a written test. For most applicants the test will involve some essay-writing and/or be the Cambridge Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). Applicants for Mathematics, Law and certain humanities subjects will take a separate two-hour written test. Everyone applying for Medicine or Veterinary Medicine, however, has to take the BMAT (BioMedical Admissions Test) of two hours duration in November. Entries for the BMAT are made separately via the individual test website. Specimen questions and further information on the BMAT and the TSA may be found at:

www.admissionstests.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/adt/

Hong Kong applicants wishing to be interviewed in Hong Kong should make this clear when submitting their COPA. Not everyone who applies will get an interview: decisions on who will be interviewed will be taken by the Cambridge Colleges, and applicants being called for interview in Hong Kong will be notified in advance.

If an applicant is selected for a *Prince Philip Scholarship* interview in Hong Kong, the interview for the Scholarship will combine with an admissions interview for a College place. A small minority of such applicants may, however, elect to travel to Cambridge for their College admissions interview. Candidates who do not succeed in obtaining a provisional Prince Philip Scholarship may nevertheless still be successful in obtaining a conditional offer for a college place in Cambridge. Nothing is lost by applying for the Scholarship.

Decisions

Cambridge Colleges will normally write to all their applicants in January to advise them of the outcome of their application. The decision may be an acceptance or a rejection; an acceptance is likely to be dependent upon satisfying specified conditions, including showing that financial support is available for the course and achieving specified grades in the qualifications that you are currently taking. Competition for places is severe: experience shows that a typical successful applicant will be well-motivated and achieving academic results in the top 1-2% of their year.

Application fees

There is an application fee of UK £30 that needs to be submitted with the COPA and a further fee of UK £120 for all those who are interviewed outside of Cambridge (to be paid prior to the interview), towards the costs of the overseas interview scheme. These fees can be paid online by credit or debit card and further information on the procedure will be provided at the appropriate time.

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*includes estimated living expenses and College fees